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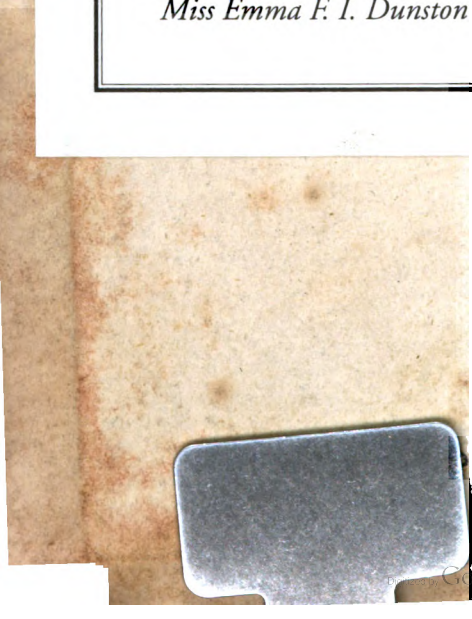

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Alicia discovering her Father in the Castle

W. Grainger, del.t et sc.

Published for I. Roe, Aug.t 1800.

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The BARON of Calderbrooke.

A TALE

By

Mr HOLLOWAY.

W. Grainger del.t et sc.

Printed for Ann Amoine, White Rose Ct. Coleman St.

AND

Sold by J. Hurst, Paternoster Row.

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THE BARON OF LAUDERBROOKE.

A TALE.

BY

W. HOLLOWAY.

To breathe the inspiring spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.
THOMSON.

London:
Printed by T. Maiden, Sherbourne-Lane,
For Ann Lemoine, White-Rose Court, Coleman-Street, and sold by T. Hurst, Paternoster-Row.

1800.

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PREFACE.

IT is certainly far more excuſable to fail in the attempt to fabricate a conſiſtent and engaging ſtory, than to corrupt the heart, and inflame the paſſions, by ſentiments inimical to the principles of virtue.

A happy combination of ſurprizing incidents, tending to bring about ſome fortunate and unexpected event, might, indeed, engage the attention, and ſufficiently ſatisfy a mind intent only on a mere ſuperficial and tranſient ſpecies of amuſement: but I have always conſidered that, in this kind of writing, an *object* of a *higher nature* ought to be kept in view.

Simple morality, unaſſiſted by any kind of machinery, (if I may be allowed the expreſſion,) is, by the generality of mankind, at beſt, accounted but a dry and unentertaining ſtudy. Even our grand ſyſtem of

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religion is happily embelliſhed with all the united aids of ſymbol, alluſion, and allegory; and, in all ages and nations, men of the greateſt abilities, and moſt rigid principles, have had recourſe to fable and metaphor, to allure the mind to hear the voice of inſtruction.

Though few, very few, writers poſſeſs the abilities of a *Richardſon* or a *Fielding*, yet, as a celebrated critic obſerves, "Between mediocrity and perfection there are many ſtations, which may be filled with honour;" and thoſe who are not qualified to ſhine in a diſtinguiſhed manner, may, nevertheleſs, be able, in their leiſure moments, humbly to ſerve the cauſe of virtue and humanity. W. H.

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THE

Baron of Lauderbrooke.

RETURNING from the fatigues of a long day's chace, in which he had ſtrayed from all his attendants, fainting with heat, and parched with thirſt, the Baron of Lauderbrooke rode up to a ſtraw-roofed cottage, on a lone heath, in order to procure a draught of water.

He was met at the door by a decent-looking woman, whoſe countenance betrayed evident marks of ſurprize and confuſion, at the appearance of ſo unuſual a viſitor.

At her requeſt, he alighted; and ſhe ſet on a table of rude planks, a bowl of milk, and a cruſt of brown bread; making a thouſand apologies for the meanneſs of the entertainment; to which ſhe rejoined,

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"If your Honour chuſes to ſtay till my daughter "returns from yon village, I ſhall then have it in "my power to treat you with an egg and a raſher "of bacon. I expect her every minute."

"Thanks for your kindneſs," replied the Baron; "I wiſh for nothing better: nor ſhould I make a "heartier repaſt from the delicacies of my own ta-"ble. Then, Dame, I conceive you have a daugh-"ter?" "Your Honour will ſee her preſently," anſwered his hoſteſs. "And a huſband likewiſe "living?" ſaid he. "Yes, your Honour. He "is now at work at the vicar's, in the village," ſaid ſhe; "and I am ſure he would be glad of your "good company; for we do not often ſee ſtrangers "at our poor habitation. The times are main hard, "Sir; but, thank God, Providence is very kind to "us. O, your Honour, that ſame vicar is a dear "good man! Aye, and Madam, his wife, is as good "a woman; and he is a great ſcholard. 'Tis ſaid "as how ne'er a man in the country can read better. "He writes out all his own *ſarments*, and repeats "'em almoſt without looking in the book. He "would fain take our girl; but he has a large fa-"mily, and can't afford to keep *no ſarvants*. *Howſ-"ever*, he always teaches her the *catichize;* and is

"always

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"always giving her good *device* and inſtruction, "which is better than gold and ſilver; for

"When houſe and land is gone and ſpent,
"Then *larning* is moſt excellent."

"True, Goody," ſaid the Baron, ſmiling; "but "let us, for a moment, ſuppoſe——"

Here the diſcourſe was interrupted by the arrival of Alicia. On her arm ſhe bore a little wicker baſket, covered with a clean white cloth; and in her hand ſhe carried a large bunch of flowers. She appeared much ſurprized at the ſight of a ſtranger, and dropped a low curtſey as ſhe entered.

Her age ſeemed to be about fifteen. Her form was tall and graceful; nor did ſhe need "the foreign aid of ornament" to add luſtre to her native charms. On her cheek the lily and the roſe were happily contraſted; the carnation of health glowed on her lips; her large blue eyes beamed with peculiar radiance; and auburn ringlets, in gloſſy cluſters, finely ſhaded a neck and boſom of poliſhed ivory.

"The

" The bloom of op'ning flow'rs, unfully'd beauty,
" Softneſs, and ſweeteſt innocence ſhe wore;
" And look'd like nature in the world's firſt ſpring."

She felt embarraſſed at the Baron's compliments, which he now began to laviſh on her charms; and a ſuffuſion of deeper crimſon ruſhed over her cheek.

He perceived, and endeavoured to calm her perturbation, by converſing on the moſt familiar topics; in the courſe of which he took occaſion to aſk, whether ſhe was diſpoſed, in caſe an opportunity offered, to accept of a menial ſituation in a reſpectable family. She anſwered, with bewitching modeſty, in the affirmative, provided her parents acquieſced in the choice, as ſhe ever made their will the rule of her actions.

" I believe, then," cried he, " I have it in my " power to recommend you, on condition you can " reconcile yourſelf to live at the diſtance of about " fourteen miles from hence. You have heard of " Lauderbrooke-Hall? A ſervant of your deſcription " is there wanting. You will have my beſt wiſhes " for your ſucceſs. Your mother ſays you are a " good girl; continue to be ſo, and I will be your " friend;

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" friend; for to raiſe merit from obſcurity will ever " be my higheſt ambition."

Alicia dropped another curtſey; a ſmile of pleaſure cheered her countenance, and ſhe looked up to her mother for her approbation.

" In troth," cried the good woman, " your " Honour is hugeous kind; but I muſt conſult our " Ambroſe firſt; for he has ſet his heart on Alle; " and is always mightily in the dumps at the " thoughts of parting with her. But the times are " ſo hard!—Ah! one don't know——*(Pauſing, " doubtingly)*—Nevertheleſs, Sir, he'll be at home " preſently. If you'll wait a little, he'll likewiſe " put you in the right road in a trice."

" Indeed, I muſt be gone," ſaid the Baron. " Night advances apace; and ſome drops begin to " fall. Make up your own minds on the buſineſs, " and you ſhall hear from me again ſoon."

The good woman urged him to ſtay; but ſhe expoſtulated in vain. He put a piece of gold into the hand of Alicia; and, promiſing her his future aſſiſtance,

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tance, thanked them for their hoſpitality, and took his leave.

Scarcely had Ambroſe entered the door, ere his ears were filled with the praiſes of the worthy gentleman who had been there; and Dorothy dwelt, with peculiar emphaſis on his promiſes to procure Alicia a place of ſervice.

"Do not be too haſty, wife," cried he, with a ſignificant ſhrug. "Your gentlefolks are not always "ſincere in their promiſes; and, 'tis ſaid, they have "wounded ſhort memories."

"There it is now," ſaid Dorothy. "You are "always ſo diſbelieving: but I know who is who, "as I have often told you; and, you know, I am "always pretty right. He is certainly a proper "gentleman; one may ſee that plain enough by his "behaviour and generoſity."

Here ſhe produced the money, which ſeemed to have a wonderful effect on the old man's temper. So powerful an arbitrator is omnipotent gold, that it has, not unfrequently, determined weightier cauſes, and biaſſed firmer minds!

"Why,

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"Why, to be ſure," anſwered Ambroſe, in a lower tone, and with his eyes fixed, "he *might* be "a gentleman, for *certain*. I ſhould like to have "ſeen him. But there's a power of deceit in the "world; and theſe young girls are never out of "harm's way. However, if Alle and you can "agree upon the matter, though I am loath to part "with the girl, as 'tis for her good, I ſhan't have "*no* objection."

After a little altercation on the ſubject, it was finally adjuſted and reſolved on, that, ſhould the gentleman ever ſend for her, agreeable to her own inclination, ſhe ſhould go.

But a few days had elapſed before a meſſenger arrived from the Baron, deſiring a peremptory anſwer to his Lord's former propoſal. He ſpoke highly of the virtues of his Lady in particular, and the family in general. In conſequence of which, he received a promiſe that the honeſt peaſant ſhould attend his daughter to Lauderbrooke-Hall in the courſe of the ſucceeding week. The interval was ſpent in making preparations for this important expedition.

The

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The long-expected morning, "big with the fate" of our youthful heroine, at length arrived, on which, after a sleepless night, she arose, at the first crowing of the cock; and, dressing herself to the best advantage, amidst mutual tears of mingled pleasure and regret, bade adieu to those scenes of infantile happiness, where simplicity and innocence had long fixed their abode, to trace the more dangerous and beaten paths of life!

Their arrival at the Hall being announced, Alicia was received by the worthy Lady Lauderbrooke not with marks of kindness only, but with a degree of maternal familiarity and tenderness; and she was, given to understand, that her situation was to be that of an immediate attendant on her Ladyship.

Lady Lauderbrooke appeared to be about the meridian of life; and her countenance was highly expressive of the graces of her mind. She had formerly possessed very considerable personal charms: but she had for many years been subject to the caprices of a husband, whose turbulent and unsettled passions, like wintry blasts, had shook the roses of health from her cheek. A kind of pleasing melancholy had cast a shade over a fine set of features, which

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which were only relieved by a ſettled gleam of placid reſignation.

Her lord was not deſtitute of ſome virtues; but they were thoſe of the rougher caſt. He was little acquainted with the fine feelings of the heart, and thoſe ſoft attractions ſo endearing to the mind of ſenſibility. She had not only long experienced a want of conjugal tenderneſs on his part, but a degree of coolneſs and neglect, which had preyed on her ſpirits, but which ſhe had always borne without murmuring or reſentment. The loſs of ſome amiable relatives had likewiſe not a little contributed to that melancholy which had a very conſiderable effect on a delicate conſtitution. She had therefore ſequeſtered herſelf as much as poſſible, and very ſeldom ſaw company; ſpending the greateſt part of her time in retirement. Alicia Elmford, on account of congenial ſentiments, rendering herſelf extremely agreeable to her, ſhe reſolved to treat her more like a companion than a ſervant; and having obſerved in her a good capacity, ſhe procured teachers to inſtruct her in thoſe polite ſtudies which elevate and adorn the ſex.

Alicia in a ſhort time made ſuch a proficiency, that ſhe aſtoniſhed all who knew her; being, without

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the leaſt tincture of oſtentation, a moſt amiable and accompliſhed young lady.

Lord Lauderbrooke had a ſon, who, having juſt completed his education, had returned home to take leave of his friends, in order to proceed on his tour to the continent. Auguſtus was about the age of nineteen, and ſtill bore all the graces of the lovely boy. His dark hair waved in cluſters over his roſy cheek, and an enchanting penſiveneſs ſhone in his large lucid eyes; nor did his converſation or conduct betray any marks of the wild and profligate youth of fortune. His diſpoſition was ſweet and cheerful, and his manners ſuch as could not fail to enſure univerſal reſpect and eſteem.

In the preſence of Alicia Elmford, his eyes ſeemed to brighten with a peculiar kind of pleaſure; nor did ſhe appear diſpleaſed with his marked attention to her. So well did he fabricate excuſes to prolong his ſtay, that he ſucceeded, without being the leaſt ſuſpected, to delay his journey for ſeveral months; in the courſe of which he redoubled his aſſiduities; although the utmoſt circumſpection was neceſſary to hide his attachment from his parents, being well aware that the ambitious ſpirit of his father would have

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have felt degraded at their inequality; and taking the alarm, have brought down ſure vengeance on both their heads.

Previous to his departure, [redacted] had engaged her to hold a friendly, but private, correſpondence with him: and at the criſis of ſeparation, ſhe experienced in her boſom a kind of ſorrow, to which ſhe had hitherto been a ſtranger. Her heart then told her that her's muſt be ſomething more than a common eſteem.

Young Auguſtus took the earlieſt opportunity of fulfilling his promiſe of writing the moment of his arrival on the continent; and but few weeks paſſed without her receiving freſh teſtimonies of unabated affection. His letters were dictated with all that warmth and zeal which in general actuate youthful minds in the ardent moments of their firſt paſſion.

Thoſe letters were tranſmitted from the neighbouring village by the hands of an honeſt peaſant, whom Alicia had found worthy of making a confidant in a matter of ſuch importance. Here it may not be improper to take notice of the commencement of her acquaintance with this poor family, as it

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may ſerve to illuſtrate the humanity and goodneſs of her heart.

She had always conſidered early riſing as highly conducive to health; on which account ſhe accuſtomed herſelf, in all ſeaſons of the year, when the weather permitted, to take her morning's walk. In one of thoſe little excurſions, which ſhe had inadvertently extended to more than a mile from the manſion, in the hedge-rows of which were interſperſed large overhanging trees, a deep groan, burſting from the inmoſt receſs of an aching heart, caught her ear. She ſtarted, and gazed around her, but nothing could ſhe diſcern, till, directed by repeated accents, in a fainter tone, ſhe got to the top of the bank; where her curioſity was ſatisfied, or rather ſhocked, by the ſight of a poor wretch, apparently in agonies of the laſt deſpair, about to plunge himſelf into a deep and ſilent river, that ſtole through the black ſhade of oziers, and high-waving ruſhes.

A ſudden reſolution, and firmneſs of mind, which ſhe always poſſeſſed, urged her to preſs forward, and addreſs the unfortunate man.

"For heaven's ſake!" ſaid ſhe, "and for your "own ſoul's ſake! whoever you are, forbear this "raſhneſs!

"rashness! Make me your confident, and, as far "as I can assist you, pray command me."

He shrunk back, and contemplated her figure with an eye of phrenzied wildness; when, as it were, recollecting himself, "Madam," said he, "I thank you for your kind intentions; but, in-"deed, they come too late! Why will you not "suffer a wretch to steal silently into that state "where the weary, and the unfortunate, shall for "ever be at rest?"

"Yield not," said she, "poor man, to the guilty "suggestions of a fruitless melancholy. Reflect, "how often imagined evil is productive of real good. "Rely on the dispensations of an all-wise Provi-"dence; and hope——"

"Ah! Madam," interrupted he, "Hope has long "been a stranger to this bosom. 'Tis not for my-"self alone this heart bleeds——"

He could proceed no farther; involuntary tears started from his eyes.

She endeavoured to soothe his mind with every argument humanity could suggest; and thus drew from

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him a candid confeſſion of the nature of his misfortunes, which he acknowledged, had been the conſequences of his own indiſcretions. His name, he ſaid, was Anthony. Employment had failed. He had a ſick wife, and three helpleſs innocents, who looked up to him for that ſupport which he was unable to give. The lord of the manor had treated him with unfeeling rigour; and his unhappy family had, for ſeveral days paſt, merely ſubſiſted on caſual charity. All thoſe things, he ſaid, had determined him to throw off an exiſtence he was no longer able to bear.

After reaſoning him into a calmer temper, ſhe reſolved to be an eye-witneſs to the truth of his aſſertion, by accompanying him to his wretched hovel. Here, ſtretched on a wiſp of ſtraw, ſhe beheld the unhappy partner of his miſery, pale and emaciated. The infants, half naked and ſhivering, were devouring their laſt mouldy morſel; and a broken pitcher contained the cold beverage with which they ſlaked their thirſt.

Alicia's heart was full; and, after a few minutes ſilence, ſhe mingled with their tears the ſtreams of generous ſympathy.

Her

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Her firſt act was to render them immediate pecuniary aſſiſtance; promiſing to uſe her intereſt with the curate of the village, a good man, who uſed to viſit the Hall, to procure him a comfortable employment. She gave the grateful family an admonitory leſſon; and took her leave with that ſatisfaction of mind, which only the good and benevolent can ever know.

Her exertions in their favour were crowned with ſucceſs. With the ſincereſt anxiety for their welfare, ſhe had repreſented their caſe, and pleaded ſo ſtrongly in their favour, to her good Lady, whoſe heart was ever alive to the warm emotions of pity, that ſhe not only encouraged her in her laudable undertaking, but crowned the work with her own patronage, and pecuniary aid. She ſoon ſaw the poor family of Anthony's comfortable and happy; and, at her frequent viſits, looking up to her, and hanging round her, as their beſt beloved friend and benefactreſs.

The health of Lady Lauderbrooke now appeared more rapidly to decline; and her amiable qualifications and ſaint-like virtues were every day heightened, by the fortitude and Chriſtian reſignation which ſhe

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more and more displayed, in her advances to a premature grave. Her favourite Alicia became every day more dear to her; and she seemed happy in her company only.

As she always looked with composure to the conclusion of her sorrows, which she considered to be not far distant, she prevailed on her Lord, who sometimes indifferently, and formally, enquired after her health, to permit her beloved son to return, in order to receive her last blessing, and close her weary eyes.

In the contemplation of this subject, she one day retired with Alicia, and, for the first time, frankly opened to her the bitter secrets of her heart.

"My dear girl," said she, which was her frequent expression "having long tried, and fully proved, "your virtues and fidelity, and being well aware that "the time is fast approaching when I shall have for "ever done with all worldly concerns; it behoves "me, while yet my mental powers are adequate to "the task, to deposit in a bosom, which I know to "be worthy of the trust, circumstances, which, had "I never been blest with so worthy a confidant, had "descended,

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" deſcended with me into the realms of forgetful-
" neſs.

" The boaſt of noble anceſtry is among the firſt
" of human follies: but I muſt derogate from truth,
" not to acknowledge that I am lineally deſcended
" from one of the firſt families in England. My
" parents, from high and miſtaken notions of honour,
" without conſulting a daughter's future happineſs,
" forced me into an alliance diametrically oppoſite to
" my wiſhes. Young, gay, and inexperienced, I
" was betrayed into the golden ſnare, by the arti-
" fices even of thoſe who ought to have directed me
" into the path of conjugal felicity, by aiding the
" bent of my own virtuous inclinations.

" My Lord, whoſe morals were far from unim-
" peachable, for awhile conducted himſelf ſo ami-
" ably, as to make an entire conqueſt of my affec-
" tions, which had hitherto been in a ſtate of indif-
" ference towards him. As is but too often the
" caſe with mankind, he took a mean advantage of
" my weakneſs, and ſhortly treated me in a manner
" little conſiſtent with the connubial character. His
" hours were divided between his bottle and his miſ-
" treſſes, nor did he even endeavour to lull my

" achir

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" aching heart with common prudence, and conceal-
" ment of those acts of profligacy. Such a change
" threw a cloud over all my golden prospects, and
" sunk me into such a state of listlessness, with re-
" gard to worldly concerns of any description, as
" was seldom interrupted but by the violent bursts of
" his impetuous passions, which sometimes broke
" forth with such fury on the most trivial occasions,
" as must have agitated any mind not more than
" human.

" There are men, my dear Alicia, whose wives
" are only slaves to their passions and their ambition;
" who, like the Mahometans, deem them inferior
" beings, without souls, who ought to be kept at an
" awful distance, to have no will of their own, and
" be treated as creatures only fit for a state of de-
" pendence and subordination!

" The only consolation I found amidst those trou-
" bles, was in the friendship of an amiable cousin
" of the name of Beaufort, whose domestic virtues
" were only equalled by his superior skill and cou-
" rage in the field. His manson and estates were
" not inconsiderable, and lay contiguous to our own,
" to which, since his loss, they have been annexed.

" Bred

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"Bred a ſoldier almoſt from his cradle, at the "commencement of the late wars, he took leave of "an affectionate wife, and infant daughter, and em- "barked for the theatre of action.

"Meanwhile, his amiable conſort ſpent moſt of "her time in retirement with me; and thoſe hours, "which now add anguiſh to my heart by recollection, "I accounted among the happieſt I had known "ſince my marriage. But I was too ſoon con- "vinced of the inſtability of human enjoyments!

"The fatal news arrived, that Edmund had "fallen at the head of his troops, in a glorious and "deciſive engagement: and, before the firſt emo- "tions of our grief ſubſided, another heavy afflic- "tion followed. The nurſe, who uſed to take a "morning's walk for the health of the infant in the "neighbouring woodlands, one day diſappeared, "and has never ſince been heard of.

"This ſhock was too much for the intellects of "the widowed, and truly diſtreſſed, parent. She "was long in a ſtate of ungovernable delirium; and, "when we deemed her grief ſomewhat ſubſided, "ſhe one evening abſented herſelf from our houſe

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" without any attendant; and having never ſince " been diſcovered, we concluded ſhe had made away " with herſelf in a paroxyſm of abſolute deſpair.

" Judge now if the heart of ſenſibility, by ſuch " a ſeries of diſaſtrous events, muſt not be too deeply " lacerated to admit of a ſpeedy, much leſs a radi- " cal, cure?

" From the firſt moment I beheld you, I traced " in your features ſuch a reſemblance to my unfor- " tunate relation, as well as ſimilitude in your vir- " tues of mind, that I could not forbear a tender " attachment to you. For your very kind and af- " fectionate ſervices to me, I have made a proviſion " for you, after my deceaſe, which might embolden " you to look up with hopes to form a reſpectable " connexion, when you ſhall wiſh to change your " condition; and I am well aware that your perſo- " nal, as well as mental, accompliſhments, are ſuch " as would do honour to the moſt exalted ſtation of " life.

" I ſpeak in confidence to you, who have ſo " well merited that confidence. Should my dear " boy ever prefer the conjugal ſtate, it is my prayer, " that

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"that he might be bleſt with a partner of ſuch "amiable qualifications."

A deep bluſh overſpread the lovely countenance of Alicia. She attempted to ſpeak her gratitude; but her articulation failed, and Lady Lauderbrooke proceeded.

"It has been the will of heaven to place you in a "dependent ſituation; but from hence I would not "wiſh you to think too meanly of yourſelf. You "have a character to ſupport equally dear as that of "thoſe in a far more elevated rank. On your ſide "are great advantages, and diſadvantages. You "may, in ſome degree, think yourſelf happy that "your inclinations are not likely to be forced, by "ambitious or mercenary parents, into any diſagree-"able connexion. But, on the other hand, you "are not out of the reach of thoſe temptations to "which youth and beauty are continually expoſed. "By ſaying this, I would not have you infer that "I mean to inſinuate, you have not a mind equal "to the attempts of depraved man; on the con-"trary, I am perſuaded that your fortitude and "virtue would eventually triumph over all tempta-"tion. Yet an admonitory word from a dying

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"friend, I am assured, will not fail of having it's "due weight, whenever, on a future occasion, it "might recur to your mind.

"The season of youth, Alicia, is a trying sea-"son. At our first setting out in life, the scene is "novel and pleasing: we look around us with en-"thusiasm; and, on a superficial survey, fondly "imagine that all who will may be happy and vir-"tuous. We hastily trust to appearances, from a "confidence, that all others are as artless and un-"designing as ourselves. The frailty of our sex, in "particular, which ought to excite pity, and claim "protection from man, is but too much the subject "of his contempt—too often the cause of our ruin. "Credulous by nature and education, we are first "betrayed, and then ridiculed and despised. It, "therefore, behoves you, in this perilous state, "not only to walk circumspectly, but, above all, "to implore divine grace to assist you in your pas-"sage through life. Tis said, "He that trusteth "his own heart is a fool." Lean not too hard on "slightly tried friendship; it might prove a spear to "pierce you to the heart! Listen with caution to "the voice of flattery; her golden bowl is fraught "with the deadliest poison.

"Above

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" Above all things, I would have you beware of " pride: It is the bane of youth, which, while it " pretends to elevate, ſinks you in the eſteem of " mankind; and is, in fact, the meaneſt of human " paſſions. To be humble, is to be wiſe. This is " a doctrine particularly inculcated and enforced by " the Chriſtian religion; and let that religion ever " be the criterion of all your actions. When you " look down on the loweſt of the human race, ſay " to yourſelf, Thoſe are my brothers and my ſiſ- " ters; and it is owing to no merit of my own, but " to the peculiar favour and will of heaven, that " my lot hath not been caſt among them. Then, " to the utmoſt of your ability, let your duty be " your pleaſure. Open the liberal hand, expand " the benevolent heart, and enjoy the beſt of luxu- " ries—that of doing good!

" The moment is faſt approaching when you will " have my council and protection no longer; yet " do I hope my ſurvivors will ſo far honor my me- " mory, as to ſtudy your happineſs. Nevertheleſs, re- " member—favour is deceitful.—Place your reli- " ance on a higher Power;—a Power that is will- " ing, and able, to direct and ſave. On this Power " have I relied through all the trying ſcenes of life,

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" and many indeed have they been; and to this Di-
" vine Power do I truſt, to lead me through the valley
" of the ſhadow of Death, and land me on that hap-
" py ſhore where ſin and ſorrow ſhall for ever ceaſe;
" where thoſe who have been waſhed in the blood of
" the Lamb, enjoy uninterrupted pleaſures at the
" right hand of the Deity for ever! Our good
" chaplain, Dr. Goodwill, I recommend for your
" future monitor —— I would fain ſay more;
" but the weakneſs of my frame prevents me.——
" My bleſſing is all I can add."

Overſpent, and nearly fainting, ſhe here reclin-
ed her head on the boſom of Alicia, whoſe heart
throbbed with contending paſſions. She was con-
ſcious ſhe had indulged a partiality for Auguſtus
incompatible with her duty, the concealment of
which ſhe conſidered as a breach of confidence and
gratitude towards his honoured parent, whoſe every
act of openneſs and generoſity added to her afflic-
tion. She ſometimes thought of throwing herſelf
at her feet, avowing her paſſion, and promiſing to
ſtifle it for ever, though at the expence of her fu-
ture happineſs; but ſhe dreaded the idea of implicat-
ing the amiable youth in her misfortunes. Love
and gratitude held divided empire in her breaſt,
nor

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nor were all the powers of reaſon able to decide the ſtrife.

The tender and affectionate manner in which Lady Lauderbrooke took an opportunity to addreſs her Lord, drew tears from thoſe eyes ſo unuſed to weep, and apparently carried conviction to his heart; though ſhe ſeduloufly avoided giving him pain by remarks, or even by bringing to his mind any diſagreeable reflections on his paſt miſconduct. In the warmeſt and moſt pathetic language, ſhe expreſſed her ſolicitude for his welfare; recommended Alicia Elmford to his protection, on her account; and conjured him to extend his views to another and a better ſtate.

He was overcome with her goodneſs, and, claſping her in his arms, pronounced her the moſt amiable, the beſt of women. This kindneſs lighted up a kind of tranſient pleaſure in her eyes, expreſſive of thoſe emotions which her weak nature was ſcarcely capable of ſupporting.

On the wings of filial affection, Auguſtus flew to receive the laſt bleſſing of the beſt of mothers. The interview was ſuch as might have been naturally ex-

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pected from the parent's situation, and the son's sensibility. Unwilling to alienate his mind in the smallest degree, she touched but slightly on his father's indiscretions; and that but with a view of cautioning him to avoid such an example.

"My dearest son," concluded she, "I look "back with pleasure to your dutiful conduct hither- "to; and, I hope, the future will never disgrace "the past. I could wish to live to see you happily "established in life: but it is not the will of Hea- "ven—and that will alone be done! I submit to "it's irrevocable decrees with reverence and resig- "nation. You will one day come into the posses- "sion of an ample fortune; but trust not to fortune "for happiness; if you do, you will be deceived. "Let me, above all things, advise you, whenever "you think of the conjugal state, to beware that "you are not misled by avarice or ambition. Let "the superstructure of love be raised on the broad "and solid base of a faithful esteem. Before you "enter on that important state, consider not merely "whether the woman you prefer can make you "happy, but, divesting yourself of every selfish "principle, be sure that you can render her like- "wise completely so.

"Alicia

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"Alicia Elmford I recommend to your indul-
"gent notice; and it is my desire you should, as
"you have hitherto done, treat her with a brother-
"ly affection. I love her as a daughter; you will
"not be disgraced by adopting her for a sister.
"Virtue is amiable in every situation in life; and it
"is no inconsiderable proof of true wisdom to set
"upon it, wherever found, it's proper value."

Augustus fell on his knee, took the extended hand of his tender parent, and bathed it in a flood of undissembled tears: but his heart was too full for utterance: He was obliged to quit the room, unable to express his gratitude, and shut himself up in his study, to reflect, in melancholy silence, on the loss he was about to sustain.

During the few remaining days of her good Lady, Alicia was her constant attendant, and scarcely ever quitted her presence; and, in her last moments, the worthy Dr. Goodwill, who had long been her spiritual father and comforter, administered to her the last sacred ordinance; and had the happiness to see her, with unshaken faith, and cheerful hope, resign her spirit into the hands of her blessed Redeemer.

The

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The death of this divine woman not only involved the family at the Hall in the deepeſt affliction, but ſpread a gloom over all the neighbourhood; the poor inhabitants having loſt in her their beſt friend and benefactreſs: though it was generally believed that Miſs Elmford, who was her exact counterpart, would ſupply her place to the utmoſt of her ability.

His Lordſhip too late lamented, with the deepeſt ſorrow, the beſt of women; and, for her ſake, promiſed to Alicia eternal gratitude and protection.

The lovely girl now flew for conſolation to the calm Chriſtian reaſoning of Dr. Goodwill. This good man, who was an honour to his profeſſion, in early life, had met with much oppoſition, on account of his ſcrupulous integrity in matters of religion; and his honeſt and diſengenuous reproofs (for he never feared the face of man) were ſo many obſtacles in his way to the favour of the great, and to worldly promotion. Such was the man whom the pious Lady Lauderbrooke had choſen for her ſpiritual preceptor, and had prevailed on her Lord, who was indifferent in thoſe things, to patronize.

He

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He was rector of a village, which produced him a very inconsiderable income: but the private bounty of this Lady rendered his situation comfortable, and enabled him to perform many acts of charity, independent of those which he daily executed as her immediate almoner.

Nor did she neglect handsomely to provide for him in her last illness.

Shortly after the death of her Lady, Miss Elmford conceived that the morals of Augustus had not been improved by his travels; he seemed no longer the modest, diffident school-boy, but the gay and confident youth of fortune; and he assumed a degree of freedom in his address, in which he made some allusions to the life of honor, as it is falsely called, which, be the consequences what they might, she was resolved to resent.

This resolution she put in practice, by refusing to admit him to her presence under any pretence. The struggle cost her dear, but she had the fortitude to persevere. The noble inflexibility of her virtue carried conviction to the heart of Augustus, when he resolved to resume his travels; and, by a long penance,

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nance, purchaſe his peace with the object of his affections, or never more return to his native country. Through the earneſt interceſſion of Joſeph Anthony, whom he had engaged in his behalf, ſhe conſented to grant him an interview previous to his departure. He expreſſed the ſincereſt contrition for any impropriety he might have been guilty of. He knelt at her feet, and ſeized her fair hand, which ſhe ſtrove to withdraw.

"If Miſs Elmford," ſaid he, "ſtill perſevere "in her reſentment, I muſt ſubmit to my fate: but, "whatever may be her determination, my paſſion "will remain unalterable. Not another of the ſex "ſhall ever engroſs my affections. My conſtant "prayers ſhall aſcend for her felicity! Till her heart "ſhall melt in pity to the unfortunate Auguſtus, "thoſe ſcenes of former happineſs ſhall never more "glad his eyes!"

He bowed, raiſed her hand reſpectfully to his lips, and with lingering looks, that "ſpoke unut-"terable things," withdrew.

Miſs Elmford fell on the ſofa, and gave way to a flood of tender tears.

Compaſſion

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Compaſſion proper to mankind appears,
Which Nature witneſs'd when ſhe gave us tears.
Of tend'reſt ſentiments we only give
This proof—To weep is our prerogative.

Auguſtus haſtened to embark; and, in a few days, ſhe heard of his ſafe arrival at Calais. Every ſcene about the Hall now wore in her eyes a gloomy appearance; and the only company ſhe choſe, were the family of Joſeph Anthony, whoſe wife was a moſt agreeable woman, and the venerable Dr. Goodwill; and to thoſe ſhe dedicated the principal portion of her time.

She had of late obſerved a viſible change in the auſtere manner of her Lord, which ſhe conſidered merely as the effect of her deceaſed Lady's recommendation of her to his favour: but his remarkable condeſcenſions ſoon began to give her ſome uneaſineſs. She had been informed of his former diſſipated character; and ſhe trembled at the idea of being a dependant on the bounty, and in the immediate power of ſuch a man. She would have been happy rather to have ſeen him ſet her at the diſtance of the humbleſt menial.

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As his melancholy wore off, she had the mortification to observe his assiduities increase. He frequently assured her, that he could not consider her in the light of a servant, (as she had requested,) but a superintendant of his domestic concerns, in which capacity he expected her to exact the subordination of all his attendants.

This trial was a painful one. She knew not how to resist his generosity, nor how to accept his favours: She wished to discover the motives from whence they arose. She was now the only female of consequence in the family; and feared a consequence so conferred would, in all probability, expose her to the envy, if not to the calumny, of a censorious world.

She consulted Dr. Goodwill occasionally; and his counsel, added to her own conscious rectitude, confirmed her mind, and fixed it's wavering. He dissembled not the failings of Lord Lauderbrooke, though his patron. He advised her so to comport herself, as to ensure respect, and, like Cæsar's wife, silence even the faintest whisper of *suspicion*.

Miss

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Miſs Elmford had acquainted her honeſt parents with the death of her benefactreſs, and darkly hinted at the critical ſituation in which ſhe ſtood. The good people took the earlieſt opportunity of expreſſing their apprehenſions; and, in their epiſtles, which were wrote by the good Clergyman, her father's employer, they tenderly cautioned her, above all things, to regard her reputation, even though ſhe ſhould be obliged to return deſtitute as ſhe left them; in which caſe, they would welcome her to their parental arms, and think themſelves happy in ſupporting her with the labour of their hands, and the ſweat of their brow.

She was but too ſoon relieved from a ſtate of incertitude, by her Lord's direct avowal of an illicit paſſion! She ſtood for a moment ſilent and ſhocked at the propoſal: but had, however, the preſence of mind to expreſs her reſentment of his conduct, with the moſt determined tone of virtue. He was diſconcerted at ſuch a repulſe; and endeavoured to ſoothe her with preſents, which ſhe rejected with the contempt they deſerved.

He left her, with the beſt grace he could, half admiring, and half execrating, her noble integrity;

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and ſhe retired to the dreſſing room formerly her honoured Lady's, where throwing herſelf on her knees, with her face on the ſofa, ſhe aſpirated a fervent prayer to Him who had been her guardian from her earlieſt years, to protect her through the perils of her preſent ſituation.

Thoſe lines, which had been written by Lady Lauderbrooke, and which ſhe had ſet to muſic, and ſung, aſſiſted by her harpſichord, on which ſhe played delightfully, afforded her much conſolation:

Rough is the path that Virtue treads;
Sharp are the thorns that ſpring around;
Narrow's the gate to which it leads,
And ev'ry ſtep enchanted ground.

Though oft the flow'ry vallies rife
Delightful to the trav'ller's eye,
Ah! tempt them not; in gay diſguiſe,
There thouſand hidden ſerpents lie.

There youth and beauty's deadlieſt foes
Await, in Fortune's ſhades, their prey;
Soft Flatt'ry's ſiren muſic flows,
With Love, aſſiduous to betray.

Oh take with thee yon modeſt maid---
RELIGION is the virgin's name---
Accept her counſel, truſt her aid,
And ſhare the bliſs her Vot'ries claim!

Indeed,

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Indeed, her Ladyſhip had formerly preſented her, as though from a kind of *prophetic impulſe*, with ſeveral of her little compoſitions, of a ſimilar turn, from which the following "Elegy, to the "Memory of an unfortunate Young Woman," cannot here be thought ſuperfluous, or mal-à-propos:—

Cold, cold, September's breezes blow,
And deep the ſhades of night deſcend,
While from the yew's funereal bough
Eve's baneful, chilly drops impend.

See'ſt thou, dim riſing through the gloom,
Appear yon white, unſculptur'd, ſtone?
Alas! 'tis lovely Emma's Tomb,
Which weeping Virtue long ſhall own.

Untimely fell the maid divine,
A victim to the wiles of Love;
Guilt's keeneſt pang—vile man!—be thine,
Whom Youth, nor Innocence, could move!

O, *Beauty!* frail and fatal dow'r!
What ſtorms, what ſnares await thy bloom,
And, in thy beſt and brighteſt hour,
Conſpire to ſeal thy haſten'd doom!

Yet, ſtill, if honour guard thy ſide,
Though Truth, nor Faith, nor Worth ſhould ſave;
Thoſe tears affection ne'er can hide,
The Muſe ſhall pour upon thy grave!

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Miſs Elmford waited for an opportunity of laying her difficulties before her reverend monitor; and, taking advantage of the abſence of Lord Lauderbrooke, and the good man's viſit in that interval, while the bluſh of unfeigned modeſty heightened her native beauties, ſhe frankly entered into every minutiæ of this vile propoſition.

The worthy doctor awhile lifted his hands and eyes in ſilent aſtoniſhment; and then gave way to a zealous reſentment of the offence.

"Can it be poſſible," exclaimed he, "that Lord "Lauderbrooke can think ſo meanly of the deareſt "friend of his departed ſaint; and *will* he not be "overawed by the matchleſs virtues of a Miſs Elm-"ford? Well may we deplore the evil bias of human "nature!—I have learnt not to fear the face of "man.—"*Woe be unto me, if I ſpeak not the* "*Truth,*" is the language of Scripture. I will "wait on his Lordſhip immediately; and, whatever "may be the conſequence, I will not forbear, till "I have kindled on his cheek the bluſh of ſhame, and "implanted in his heart a deep remorſe, for neglect-"ing the dying admonitions of the beſt of women!"

"Pardon

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"Pardon me, dear Sir!" ſaid ſhe, dropping on "her knee, "if I beſeech you not to let this affair "go beyond yourſelf. I dread the vengeance of a "man of ſuch violent paſſions; and hope the re-"pulſe he has met with from me, will reſtrain him "from ſimilar freedoms. Many, many, obliga-"tions do I owe to this family: let not its tran-"quillity be diſturbed on my account! I ſhould be "ſorry to appear ungrateful to the huſband of my "dear deceaſed Lady, however unworthily he has "acted!"

The good man was charmed with her gratitude and humility, and tenderly raiſed her, with aſſuran-ces that he would, for her ſake, let the matter drop: but cautioned her to beware that an over-ſtrained generoſity did not betray her into a ſnare; obſerving, that an exceſs of Mercy is a breach of Juſtice. He added, that, ſhould her Lord preſume further, on her ſilence, he ſhould think himſelf de-ficient in his duty, and unworthy of his ſacred call-ing, did he not reprove him with unqualified ſeve-rity; for he was commiſſioned from above, to uſe all his poor abilities, in order "to turn men from "the error of their ways;" and to direct them into the paths of ſalvation.

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She bowed assent; but her heart was too full for a reply. He obsequiously retired, and left her to melancholy reflection.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed she, wringing her hands, "what a change do I experience! Where "shall I turn for protection, when those who are "entrusted to guard my honour and happiness, "prove unfaithful to their charge! Are Father and "Son both in league against me? Yet, am I "bound by Gratitude—by Love—to keep an *al-* "*most criminal* silence!—"

Her feelings were now wrought up to the highest pitch, when she threw herself into a chair, and sought that relief which is the privilege of misfortune, while those charming lines of Roscommon struck with full force on her mind:

How happy is the harmless country maid,
Who, rich by nature, scorns superfluous aid;
Whose modest cloaths no wanton eyes invite,
But, like her soul, preserve their native white;
Who, free from storms, which on the great ones fall,
Makes but few wishes, and enjoys them all!
While on sweet grass her bleating charge does lie,
One happy lover feeds upon her eye:
Not one who on her, gods, or men, *impose*;
But one whom *Love* has for this Lover *chose*.

Many

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Many weeks paſſed before ſhe obſerved any thing in the conduct of her Lord which could renew her uneaſineſs, till one day, in the courſe of a converſation, into which he had imperceptibly drawn her, he took occaſion to endeavour to conciliate her mind, by a very valuable preſent of jewels, formerly her Lady's; offering, at the ſame time, ſome apologies for his late conduct; but ſtill avowing a paſſion, which he declared himſelf abſolutely unable to conquer.

She dropped on her knees, and claſping her hands, in agony, exclaimed, "O, my Lord! why "did you take me from the humble ſtation in which "you found me, to make me either *guilty* or *un-* "*grateful?* O ſpare me! and let me return to my "parents, and to my native poverty; but let me "retain the innocence I brought hither! If you "grant this requeſt, for yourſelf, and for every "branch of your family, ſhall my daily prayers be "offered; and I will never ceaſe to invoke a thou- "ſand bleſſings on your heads!"

Fortunately, his Lordſhip loſt his diſcretion at this ſpeech; and the natural turbulence of his temper returning, he exclaimed, "Perverſe girl! ſhall I

"not

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" not be obeyed? You are as unworthy of my *notice*, " as of my *generoſity!* But, I have you ſtill in my " power—And—remember!—I will take care— " Ingrateful!——" He ſaid no more, but flung himſelf away; and clapped the door after him, with ſuch violence as ſhook the whole fabric.

Miſs Elmford remained thunderſtruck, and her eyes refuſed her their wonted relief of tears. She ſtood almoſt inanimate, a ſtatue of deſpair. His laſt words ſunk deep into her heart: they contained a threat; imperfect, indeed, but terrifying.—" *Remember!—I will take care!*" Perhaps, thought ſhe, he meant for the concluſion—" *You ſhall not eſcape!*"

The ſtate of her mind, for the remainder of the day, was a ſtate of inexpreſſible anxiety, apprehenſion, and alarm. She confined herſelf to her room till the evening, when, weary of her perplexing conjectures, and of *herſelf*, ſhe intended taking a walk in the grove, behind the houſe; a ſcene which, for its tranquil and retired ſituation, ſhe was remarkably attached to.

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The path to this pleaſant ſpot lay through the kitchen garden, at the extremity of which was a little wicket, which opened into the principal avenue. This wicket had never had any other faſtening than that of a latch. What muſt have been the aſtoniſhment of Miſs Elmford, when ſhe found it ſecured by a ſtrong lock, and could get no information of the key from any of the ſervants!

Her fears were now confirmed: and ſhe had every reaſon to ſuppoſe, from her prevaricating anſwers and conduct, that one of the upper female ſervants, who had been ſuſpected of an intimacy with her Lord, was in the ſecret.

Her caſe was now deſperate, and ſhe ſet all her invention on the ſtretch, to meditate an eſcape from a place and people, which ſhe began to deſpiſe as well as fear. It was impoſſible to ſcale the wall without aſſiſtance, and ſhe knew not but every one in the family might be in the intereſt of her Lord.

Surrounded, perhaps, by ſpies, ſhe knew it would be in vain to attempt to leave the houſe by way of the front gates; as, in that caſe, ſhe would be open to their view, for at leaſt half a mile over the lawn.

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lawn. A thought at laſt ſtruck her, which appeared highly favourable to her deſign.

The wife of Joſeph Anthony, by the recommendation of Miſs Elmford, was laundreſs to the family; and the good man, on a certain day in every month, fetched the linen from the Hall for the waſh at their own houſe. She recollected this was the evening on which he was to come.

In the evening he arrived, and, as uſual, was introduced to his benefactreſs, whom, to his great ſurprize, he found in tears; but he congratulated himſelf on his good fortune in having a letter to preſent her, which he had juſt received from Auguſtus; and which, he concluded, would adminiſter the comfort of which ſhe ſeemed to ſtand in need. She took it with an abſent mind, and broke the ſeal; but was too much agitated to examine it's contents.

"Oh, Joſeph!" ſaid ſhe, "I once had the "good fortune to render you a ſervice. I now "ſtand in need of a return of that friendſhip. Can "you be ſecret? You ſee me now a priſoner in "the very houſe in which I have formerly been "ſo

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" ſo happy! I muſt fly this place. Will you aſſiſt " me? Will you ſave me from the dangers which " ſurround me?"

Joſeph ſtood fixed to the earth, in gaping aſtoniſhment. He made no farther enquiries than, what could he do to ſerve her?

She ſaid, if he could conceal in his baſket of linen, and take away a few neceſſaries, which ſhe would fetch him, to keep them at his houſe till he ſhould hear farther from her, ſhe would truſt to Providence for the reſt; when, hardly giving him time to reply, ſhe haſtened up to her room, and packing up a few trifles, committed them to the care of honeſt Joſeph; begging him to leave the houſe as ſoon as poſſible, in order to avoid ſuſpicion. When ſhe bade—God bleſs him, and his family, his looks ſpoke a reſpectful curioſity; and the tears gliſtened in his eyes as he retired.

" Joſeph!" whiſpered ſhe, catching the door before it cloſed, " another word. My troubles " make me forgetful. Do you think it impoſſible to " procure a key, which may open the wicket " that leads into the grove?" " Can you deſcribe " it's

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"it's make, Madam," said he? "I think," replied she, "it is but a common lock. The key, "unfortunately, I have not seen."

"I shall be here again to-morrow, Madam. I "will endeavour to get two or three keys; one or "the other of which may, perhaps, answer your "purpose, if you are *determined*"——

"*Determined!*"—interrupted she.—"I am, *in-* "*deed*, determined," Joseph.—My happiness, pre- "sent and future, is concerned.—Be secret; be "expeditious!"

Here the sound of a foot on the stairs precipitated his departure. He hastened to dispatch his business, and quit the house.

At a late hour, a gentle tap at the door roused Miss Elmford from her melancholy reverie. It was Mrs. Eleanor, whom we have before mentioned as the favourite of Lord Lauderbrooke. She came under a pretence to enquire after her health, and to offer her consolation in her trouble. Her discourse indirectly led to the amiable qualities of her Lord, and the high esteem he professed for Miss Elmford.

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Elmford. She eaſily ſaw through the artifice, grew uneaſy, but, without offering a direct reſentment, removing from one chair to another, tacitly evinced her contempt of the meſſage and the meſſenger.

Eleanor, from a want of equanimity, after a little while, flamed out, upbraided her with illiberality, and want of gratitude to the family: nor did ſhe even ſpare to *threaten*, when Miſs Elmford could not be induced to anſwer her impertinent remarks or interrogations; and at laſt flung away from her in a manner which ſeemed to forbode ſome more alarming misfortune.

She thought this a not unfortunate, though diſagreeable, incident, by which ſhe now ſaw well to what ſhe had to truſt, and could not cloſe her eyes to ſleep for the night, growing impatient, almoſt to diſtraction, to know the event of her ſcheme with Joſeph.

In order to divert her melancholy, ſhe opened the letter, which ſhe received the preceding day; and which, in her perturbed ſtate of mind, ſhe had hitherto forgotten. She obſerved that it's date was

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a month prior to its receipt; from whence she concluded that it must have been miscarried, or mislaid for the intervenient time. Spite of all her struggles, her heart beat to love, when she cast her eyes on the subscription; and it's contents were such, as considerably interested her feelings, and bespoke for the writer a degree of compassion, of which she thought her bosom incapable. He concluded by observing that, he could no longer absent himself from her presence; but that, sensible of the impropriety of his conduct, which he ascribed only to youthful levity, and wearied with racking suspence, he was determined to return home, and throw himself at her feet, to solicit her mercy, or meet that fate which must be the consequence of her inflexible determination.

Joseph having staid later than his usual hour, she began to fear that some suspicions had arisen; and that he would be refused admittance to her. She, however, soon found herself agreeably deceived, by his arrival with the promised keys, by which circumstance she found her mind much relieved; and making him a pecuniary present, with a promise to give him early information of her success, she

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ſhe diſmiſſed him with tears in his eyes, and half-uttered bleſſings on his tongue.

On revolving the ſtep ſhe was about to take, Miſs Elmford's heart palpitated with undeſcribable ſenſations; nor was the leaſt cauſe of her regret, that of leaving her little library, with which ſhe had been complimented by her worthy Lady; and where, in her company, ſhe had ſpent ſome of the happieſt moments of her life.

This collection did honor to the taſte and piety of that divine woman. In addition to the firſt claſſical productions in divinity, hiſtory, biography, &c. it compriſed the lighter ſpecies of literature; though every thing of a looſe, irreligious, or indelicate nature, which ſerves to corrupt the taſte, or inflame the paſſions, were carefully excluded.

Her Ladyſhip was neither pedant nor bigot; her judgment was ſound, her reaſoning truly logical, as well as Chriſtian, by which ſhe ſoared above thoſe narrow notions, which ſometimes prejudice and cramp the moſt worthy minds. Of thoſe poets who have eſpouſed the cauſe of virtue and religion, ſhe had the higheſt opinion; and authors who taught

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by example as well precept, ſhe ever held in the greateſt eſtimation; among the foremoſt of thoſe ranking the ingenious *Mr. Richardſon*, whoſe works ſhe frequently read, and whoſe maxims more frequently recommended and inculcated.

Fable and allegory were originally intended to be the vehicles of edification and morality. They were the chaſte dreſſes in which exuberant fancy exhibited the faireſt forms of truth and virtue, in order to render them more captivating to mankind. Thoſe who read the ſcriptures attentively, will find many of their ſcruples obviated, by obſerving a principal part of them contain much of this kind of writing. The poetical parts, particularly, abound with imagery, alluſions, metaphor, and figures, which muſt ſtrike the mind very forcibly; not to ſay any thing of that ſublime *whole*, which forms ſo complete a *ſyſtem* of morality and redemption.

But, in proceſs of time, the *external* embelliſhments became the objects of admiration, while the *internal* lay diſguiſed, or hid from public notice; hence thoſe tales replete with incident, and deſtitute of ſentiment; written to no purpoſe, and read to no end! from which the ſcrupulous have formed an

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an unfavourable opinion, and continued to decry the whole as corrupt and immoral.

Nor can we form a much more charitable judgment of many works profeſſedly *ſentimental*. Are not the moſt brilliant ſentiments of our modern authors ill-directed, or miſapplied? Do they not tend rather to ennervate than ennoble the mind? Even thoſe who are the warmeſt enthuſiaſts for *ideal* ſenſibility, do they often diſplay it in their conduct in life? They can paſs by the ſtarving child of misfortune with cold indifference; ſpurn "the naked "wanderer of the ſtreet;" or treat with ſarcaſtic cruelty, the unfortunate female whom hard neceſſity has driven to ſeek an aſylum in infamy!

It would, indeed, be well if writers of every deſcription, in their lighter flights, would "keep in their mind's eye" that fine remark of Boileau:

"Rien n'eſt beau que le Vrai. Le Vrai ſeul eſt aimable:
"Il doit regner par tout; & meme dans la fable.
"De toute Fiction l'adroite Fauſeté
"Ne tend qu'a faire aux yeux briller la Verité"

Theſe were the opinions of that good Lady to whom Miſs Elmford owed her paſt happineſs, and

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they are happily conformable to those of a worthy, and learned dignitary of the church of England.*

The critical moment at last arrived. When the bell rung the servants to dinner, our adventurer stole down the back stairs, and, greatly agitated, walked into the garden: yet considering this as probably the last opportunity she would have, she hastened towards the gate, which was hidden from sight of the house by the interposition of some large spreading evergreens.

With a trembling hand, she applied two keys in vain; but the third fortunately effected her design, and admitted her into the grove.

With a fluttering heart, looking behind her every few steps, she flew down the gravel walk, which led, beneath the clump of firs, by her favourite chair, where she used to sit and read, till she had passed the gate which led into the great public road, where, to elude pursuit, she struck into a bye path, which she concluded would bring her into another, by which she should be able to reach her father's house about midnight, confiding in the early

* *Archbishop Tillotson.*

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early riſing of the moon, and the ſineneſs of the evening.

Under her arm ſhe carried a ſmall bundle, which contained a few neceſſaries; and ſhe thought herſelf juſtified in taking with her what valuables ſhe poſſeſſed from the former kindneſs of her indulgen Lady, the very recollection of whom filled her mind with agonizing pangs. Oft would the big ſigh burſt from her boſom, and the tear roll down her damaſk cheek, as ſhe caſt her eyes over the vaſt extent of country, which now began to fade around, as the ſun ſunk beneath the diſtant azure hills;

The ev'ning now with bluſhes warms the air;
The ſteer reſigns his yoke, the hind his care;
The clouds aloft with golden edgings glow,
And falling dews refreſh the flowers below.

To a heart at eaſe, the ſerenity of the evening, and the beauty of the ſurrounding landſcape, might have afforded much pleaſure. It was compoſed of fine level downs, on one hand, purpled with wild thyme, whoſe fragrance floated on every gale: on the other appeared vallies, watered with ſerpentine ſtreams, whoſe banks were cloathed in green and yellow;

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yellow; and, to bound the whole, hanging-woods, which covered the ſcreens of the hills, as far as the eye could ſtretch. All theſe in vain conſpired to harmonize the paſſions of the fair exile. She had ſome faint recollection of having paſſed this road once before; that was with her beloved father, in their way to Lauderbrooke Hall; but how different then were her ſenſations! then, all was novelty and expectation: now, bitter reflection and regret.

According to her own computation, ſhe muſt have been about ſeven or eight miles diſtant from the Hall, when the laſt faint gleams of the ſetting ſun quitted the tops of the hills, and the black clouds begun to riſe on the verge of the horizon.

Approaching the borders of an extenſive foreſt, ſhe met a woodman with a bundle of ſticks on his back, and his bill hanging on his arm, returning from his labour. Encouraged by the openneſs and ſimplicity of his countenance, ſhe enquired if the path ſhe was then in lay directly through the wood; and whether there were any croſs roads, which might miſlead her?

"Madam,"

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"Madam," anſwered he, "if your honor "would be adviſed, I believe you would not go "through that wood, but take your road on the "left, which goes round it: it may be a mile far-"ther, or ſo: but 'tis almoſt night; and I fear, "by the working of the clouds, that we have a "ſtorm coming. Beſides, they ſay there has been "bloody work hereabouts: that ſome paſſengers "were formerly killed near an old caſtle, which "you will paſs, by the road's ſide; and that the "ſpirit has been ſeen to croſs the road frequently, "ſtaring *martagouſly* with eyes as large as ſaucers! "For my part, I have *never* ſeen *nothing* myſelf; "but I know thoſe that have; and ha' been mainly "frightened too!"

"And, pray friend, is the caſtle you ſpeak of "inhabited?" ſaid ſhe.

"O, yes," ſaid he. "Some old people live "there; but they are ſeldom ſeen out by any body. "As for me, I would not live in it for all the "world!"

Poſſeſſed of a mind duly ſenſible of ſerious impreſſions, but ſuperior to ſuperſtitious notions, ſhe ſmiled

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ſmiled at his ſimplicity, thanked him for his kind information and advice, and proceeded on her journey.

*

She had not gone far, before the heavens were obſcured with blackeſt clouds, and the riſing winds howled loud through the bending branches of the ancient foreſt oaks. Theſe preſages were ſucceeded by a violent ſtorm of rain, and a clap of diſtant thunder.

She now began to tire, and felt her ſpirits fail her, when ſhe obſerved a faint glimmering light, on an eminence a little way on the right, towards which ſhe turned; and with ſome difficulty paſſed the court, which was ſtrewed with maſſy ruins, that the rude hand of Time had ſhaken from their foundations.

After knocking two or three times at the door, it was opened by an old woman, with a taper in her hand, the feeble rays of which ſerved to diſcover a countenance far from affording encouragement to our benighted traveller. The complexion of her hoſteſs was of a waniſh yellow, furrowed with the deep wrinkles of age; her brows overſhadowed a pair

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pair of red and hollow eyes, with a nose and chin which nearly formed an arch over a wide and toothless mouth.

Miss Elmford, with a modest diffidence, begged pardon for her freedom, informing her that, not being accustomed to this part of the country, and night coming on, together with tempestuous weather, she had been induced to beg the favour of the indulgence of their kitchen fire till the morning, for which she would gladly make them a compensation.

A hoarse voice, which seemed to issue from an adjacent room, then said, "Let 'em come in." At which the old woman opened the door, and stood on one side to admit her, measuring her from head to foot, with her eye, as she entered, as though in admiration of her beauty and elegant form; then shutting the door, in an unsocial accent, with a kind of half welcome, she bade her follow her.

She introduced her into a large apartment, the walls of which were decorated with tattered pictures, hatchments, rusty weapons, and pieces of ancient armour, some of which were hung on the large ant-

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lers of the ſtag. The floor was checquered with black and white marble. A few antiquated damaſk chairs and a table were all the furniture it contained; and thoſe were evidently in the laſt ſtage of decay.

Before a ſmoaky wood fire, on the hearth, in a worm-eaten chair, ſat a grizly figure of a man, over whoſe ſallow and ſickly features ſeemed to hang a gloom of melancholy, which particularly ſtruck her attention.

He drew aſide his chair, to make room for them; but ſtill preſerved a dark and ſullen ſilence. For a moment he raiſed his eyes to the lovely countenance of his fair gueſt; then fixed them again on the fire, in a kind of ſtupid contemplation.

A ſigh burſt from the boſom of Miſs Elmford, which ſeemed to awaken the curioſity of her hoſteſs, who then firſt expreſſed a deſire of being made acquainted with the cauſe of her journey. Miſs Elmford was encouraged by her interrogations, and artleſsly gave a ſhort hiſtory of the laſt few years of her life.

Her

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Her tale now began to win the attention of the old man likewiſe, who liſtened with an apparent degree of intereſt; and even now and then required a repetition of ſome particular paſſages of her narration; at the concluſion of which, they both withdrew to the door, where they ſeemed to converſe with ſome earneſtneſs, though in a low voice; and, by their frequently caſting their eyes towards her, ſhe concluded that they were conſulting how to accommodate her for the night.

The old woman then ſet on the table a cruſt of brown bread and cheeſe, to which ſhe added a jug of ſour beer; of which Miſs Elmford partook with thankfulneſs, for ſhe had ate little that day.

After ſupper, the old man retired to reſt: when her hoſteſs informed her, that ſhe had only two beds in the houſe, one of which had not been ſlept on for a long time, and was in a room which was very ſeldom opened, and wanted airing. If ſhe could diſpenſe with that, and could lie down with her clothes on, ſhe was welcome; and ſhe would leave her a lamp to burn by her.

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She accepted the offer with gratitude; and having conducted her through some intricate passages to the apartment, the old woman, whose name, she learnt, was Magdalene, wished her good night, shut the door, and retired.

After falling on her knees, and recommending herself to the protection of the Almighty, she composedly arose, and contemplated her situation. The furniture of the bed-room was of the same stamp and date as that of the apartment below.

The storm now abated, the winds subsided, and the moon was breaking through the clouds right before her window, which was of the gothic architecture, and whose dim panes would scarce admit it's feeble rays. She raised herself on a broken chair, and looked out at a casement, which clattered as she opened it, from whence she was enabled to form some idea of the building. It was a structure which had often seen the ruthless hand of Time—

"Sweep the toiling race of men,
"And all their laboured monuments, away."

The two round towers, with decayed battlements crowned with mantling ivy, caught the beams of the moon,

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moon, and roſe in the boldeſt point of light: the other parts were maſſed in ſhade. Amidſt the ſtillneſs of midnight, the hooting of the owl, and the ruſtling of the dying breeze through the ſurrounding trees of the extenſive foreſt, added not a little to the ſolemnity of the ſituation.

The walls of the room ſhe poſſeſſed were damp, mouldy, and ſtreaked with green, where the rains had frequently oozed through the neglected roof; and, as ſhe examined every part minutely, ſhe diſcovered a trap-door in the corner, which opening with great difficulty, ſhe ſaw a few ſteps, which communicated with a long dark gallery, of which ſhe could not ſee the end. Her courage failed her: ſhe ſhut the door ſoftly, and laid her down on the bed: but found it impoſſible to compoſe her eyes to ſleep, from a reſtleſs curioſity to become acquainted with the other parts of this myſterious building.

Soon as day-light entered her windows, ſhe aroſe; again opened the trap-door, and taking the lamp in her hand, deſcended the ſteps, and paſſed the gallery; at the end of which ſhe conceived ſhe heard a voice, like that of one in prayer or ſupplication. She ſtarted back, and recovered her ſur-

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prize, by endeavouring to perſuade herſelf that thoſe ſounds were only the ſuggeſtions of a diſturbed imagination; when a grating behind her, like that of ſomebody unlocking the door of her apartment, recalled her attention, and ſhe flew back, and let down the trap-door with the greateſt precaution; which ſhe had no ſooner done, than her hoſteſs entered; and it was with difficulty our fair adventurer could conceal her perturbation.

Magdalene appeared far more civil and converſible than on the preceding evening, and even apologized for the poverty of her lodgings, and ſo forth. Her lovely gueſt, with unaffected gratitude, ſilenced her with thanks for her kind attention and ſolicitude on her account.

They both returned to the room to which ſhe was at firſt introduced; and the old man, whoſe name, ſhe underſtood, was Rufus, joined them at breakfaſt; nor was he ſo reſerved as he had hitherto appeared. He led to the ſubject of the laſt night's converſation, and, ſhe thought, he ſeemed to dwell upon it in a remarkable manner. They both adviſed her by no means to think of purſuing her journey alone through the foreſt, without a guide; and then,

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then, without giving her time to reply, inſiſted ſhe ſhould ſtay till noon, and take a relation of theirs, who would arrive about that time, to accompany and direct her.

She expreſſed great anxiety to go: but her hoſt (apparently from motives of kindneſs) refuſed to comply with her deſire.

She paſſed the morning with the greateſt impatience, and no viſitor appeared. She had frequently obſerved Rufus and his wife withdraw, and converſe in a low voice, with ſome degree of warmth; but her generous heart was ready to check every ſuſpicion which roſe in her mind, on balancing ſuch circumſtances. She knew not deceit herſelf, and was ever willing to judge favourably of others.

Evening approached, and the promiſed guide did not arrive; when ſhe again yielded to their importunities, to ſtay with them another night. To this ſhe the more readily conſented, from a hope of having another opportunity of making farther diſcoveries; which lay much on her mind.

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When her hoſt and hoſteſs were gone to reſt, ſhe took her lamp in her hand, with great intrepidity opened the myſterious door, and again deſcended into the long gallery, at the end of which ſhe diſcovered another door, with a large ruſty key in it, which appeared to be ſeldom touched by mortal hand.

Here ſhe fixed herſelf, and liſtened; when the ſame voice again ſtruck her ear, and ſhe could plainly diſtinguiſh theſe words, which ſeemed to form the concluſion of a prayer, and were pronounced with a ſtrong and deliberate emphaſis:—"Yet not my will, O Lord! but thine be done!"

For a moment ſhe ſtood petrified: but ſoon collecting courage, and putting to all her ſtrength, turned the key, the grating of which, together with that of the reluctantly opening door, reverberated through the long and hollow arches, with a ſound ("to compare ſmall things with great") not unlike Milton's infernal doors,

"Which on their hinges grated
"Harſh thunders; which the loweſt bottom ſhook
"Of Erebus!"

Here

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Here she beheld a venerable figure of a man, just rising from an attitude of prayer. He was wrapt in a long cloak; his person was tall and graceful; his long beard waved in profusion over his breast; and on his pale countenance, peace and resignation were visibly pourtrayed. The furniture of his cell appeared to be only a wretched bed, a chair, and a broken table, on which lay a dirty bible, the best and only solace of his melancholy hours.

He turned his eyes towards the door, with astonishment, at sight of the lovely stranger; and his bosom heaved a deep sigh as he articulated, "Unfortunate woman! by what perverse destiny are "you doomed to become a partaker of my misfortunes?"

"Pardon, reverend man," said she, "pardon "an undesigning female, whose curiosity only can "apologize for her intrusion."

"Ask not my pardon," said he; "'tis a momentary gratification to me once more to behold "the human face divine; but an additional pang "distends my bosom, when I reflect, that another "of my fellow-creatures is fallen into the hands of "those

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" thoſe fiends, *whoſe tender mercies* are inexpreſſibly *cruel!*"

Her blood thrilled cold through her veins, as he finiſhed his ſentence; and a ſerious ſenſe of her perilous ſituation agitated her whole frame.

She, however, called up all her fortitude, and ſtilled the apprehenſions of the good man, by aſſuring him that ſhe had it ſtill in her power to quit the place whenever ſhe choſe.

" Truſt then no longer thoſe people," ſaid he: " You know them not; they deſerve not your con-" fidence. Seize the opportunity. Conſider your " own ſafety; and leave me to my fate!"

Miſs Elmford felt a ſudden ſhock at this alarming injunction!—

" Before the morning," ſaid ſhe, " I *cannot* " go. This night ſhall be devoted to your conver-" ſation. Unboſom to me your misfortunes; and " I will hazard my own life to render you ſervice!"

" Kind

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"Kind and virtuous young lady!" exclaimed he, "you have my heartfelt thanks for your "good intentions: But, Ah! I fear"——He ſhook his head—heſitated, and then remained ſorrowfully ſilent.

She interpreted that ſilence not at all in her own favour. However, after ſome little expoſtulation, ſhe drew from him the following brief hiſtory of his misfortunes.

"Deſcended from an ancient and honourable fa-"mily," ſaid he, "I entered into life with the "faireſt proſpects, and the higheſt expectations. "My name can avail you nothing; my misfortunes "claim your commiſeration.

"At an early age, I conceived an invincible "paſſion for the profeſſion of arms; and, having "obtained a commiſſion, had the honour of ſigna-"lizing myſelf in different actions in the ſervice of "my king and country.

"In the late war, I was called upon to leave "an affectionate wife and an infant daughter, to "whoſe fate, alas! I am to this day a ſtranger"——

Here

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Here he clasped his hands, and raised his eyes in agony, while the big tears rolled down the furrows of his grief-worn cheek.

"I left,"—with some difficulty, resumed he—"my native country, for the seat of war on the continent; where, after having surmounted many "difficulties, and braved death in all its most dreadful forms, I returned, crowned with laurels, at "the conclusion of a glorious campaign, to repose "myself on the downy bosom of domestic felicity. "But what mortal shall *presume* on *future* happiness? I had scarcely set foot on my native soil, "when I was attacked in passing a wild heath by a "band of ruffians—by whose hands my faithful servant fell—who brought me ingloriously gagged "and blindfolded, by bye-ways, from a great distance, to this scene of horror, where I have remained ever since: never having till now been blessed "with the sight of a human being, but the wretches, "who deserve not that appellation, who bring me "my scanty morsel of daily food. I know not "how many years I have lingered here. I lost the "era of computation in a fever and delirium, into "which I fell, through the violence of my grief, "on first entering this mansion of sorrow. This "disorder

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" diſorder muſt have laſted me a very conſiderable time;
" and, even after my reſtoration to reaſon, I ſunk
" into a hopeleſs ſtupor of a ſtill longer duration.
" But, thanks to the God of all mercies! he
" has at laſt taught me " to look above this *little*
" *ſcene of things*;" and, ſince there is no hope for
" me on this ſide the grave, hath endued my ſoul
" with faith and patience, to wait with humble reſig-
" nation for the rapturous moment when he ſhall
" wipe away all tears from my eyes, and grant me
" an holy and happy enfranchiſement. With David
" of old, I have learned to walk always in his ſight,
" and to call on him night and day. His word
" alone is my conſolation and delight: confiding in
" that, I paſs the " valley of the ſhadow of
" death;" and hope to come forth from the furnace
" of affliction like gold ſeven times purified by
" fire!"

Alicia ſtood fixed in ſpeechleſs amazement, at the recapitulation of ſome circumſtances, which ſhe had before heard from the mouth of her late much-honoured Lady—But recovering herſelf a little, ſhe exclaimed, with a tremulous accent—

" Gracious

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"Gracious Heaven! and is it poſſible your name "can be—

"Beaufort"—interrupted he, with an eagerneſs that evinced equal ſurprize, while he raiſed his eyes to hers, with all the impatience of curioſity.

At that very moment they were alarmed by a violent noiſe, like that of a huge fragment of the building deſcending on the floor above their heads.

They were both ſtartled. "Fly!" ſaid he, "ſweet excellence! Fly this inſtant, leaſt you be "implicated in my misfortunes! Conſider your "own ſafety, and leave me to Providence!"

He caught her hand; but had not time to thank her. She burſt away, darted through the gallery, mounted the ſteps, and ſhut down the trap-door with the greateſt caution.

Trembling, and half breathleſs, with the violence of her agitation, ſhe threw herſelf on the bed, in which ſtate ſhe thought ſhe heard a voice of diſtreſs, and the ſound of footſteps on the ſtairs; when her hoſteſs appeared with ſtrong marks of horror depicted in her countenance. "For

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"For God's ſake, young Lady!" cried ſhe, "riſe, and come with me this inſtant!"

A thouſand fears and ſuſpicions at once ruſhed into her mind; yet, although hardly able to ſupport herſelf, with trembling ſteps ſhe followed Magdalene up the ſtairs, at the top of which ſhe found her huſband ſtruggling in a fit.

The idea of the crimes of thoſe wretches ſtruck her with a ſecret horror; but, ever alive to the calls of humanity, ſhe rendered every aſſiſtance in her power, to raiſe and reſtore the miſerable object before her, whoſe eyes rolled with a kind of guilty terror on all around him; and, during the whole of that melancholy night, he appeared to enjoy but ſhort intervals of returning reaſon. He now and then made ſigns, and muttered broken ſentences, which the wife ſeemed anxious to ſuppreſs or conceal; nor was ſhe much leſs reſtleſs and uneaſy than himſelf. Her perturbation of ſpirits muſt, indeed, have been obvious to any one though not poſſeſſed of ſuch lights as Miſs Elmford, who now hardly knew to which object to direct her pity.

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It is dreadful to behold the laſt ſtruggles of conſcious guilt—

" When Conſcience ſpeaks—for it *will* ſpeak at laſt,
" Our *leave* unaſked!"

And it is the maxim of the truly liberal mind, from a ſenſe of it's own imperfections, at that awful criſis, at which the ſtouteſt heart recoils, if it be not invulnerable, to—

" Abhor the crime, but mourn the man!"

" Sure there is none but dreads a future ſtate—
" And when the moſt obdurate ſwear they do not,
" Their trembling hearts belie their boaſting tongues!"

Towards the approach of day-light, he lay more compoſed, and fell into a ſlumber; but would frequently, like Shakeſpear's ſanguine Monarch,* ſtart, and exclaim—" Take them away!—Take " them away!—I waſh my hands of it!"

Miſs Elmford renewed her wiſh to depart, while yet ſhe had the day before her: but the old woman, with the utmoſt earneſtneſs, and with eyes ſwimming

* Richard III.

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ming in tears, beſought her not to leave her, till ſhe could procure ſome aſſiſtance, or her huſband's diſorder ſhould take a favourable turn; yet, be it as it may, ſhe promiſed that ſhe would not detain her longer than the next day. It was painful to her to refuſe, though doubly ſo to comply with thoſe hard and unpleaſant conditions. She was willing to ſet circumſtances in the beſt poſſible light; and hoped, from the appearance of ſincerity in Magdalene's profeſſions of gratitude, that her perſon was ſafe at leaſt; and that this procraſtination, through an unforeſeen event, might give her ſome farther opportunity of ſeeing and rendering her ſervices to an innocent and unfortunate man, in whoſe fate ſhe felt her mind ſo inexpreſſibly intereſted.

Another day, and great part of the night, paſſed in the moſt gloomy ſolicitude: but a little before the morning began to dawn, they obſerved in the old man a more permanent degree of reaſon; but, alas! it only returned to awaken him to the moſt poignant deſpair.

His whole frame was in a ſtate of the moſt violent trepidation; and in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, he exclaimed,

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" Wretch that I am! whither ſhall I fly? What " have I done? Why will not conſcience ceaſe to " torment me? Ah! I have done *ſuch* things— I " have been guilty of *ſuch* enormous crimes, that " the door of hope is ſhut againſt me for ever! In- " jure not the innocent—we *have* done that too " much *already*."—[*Turning his eyes to his* " *wife.*]—" Set them at liberty—Add no more to " my load of guilt! by which I am overwhelmed— " and ſinking! I am about to enter into eternity, " with hands imbrued with blood! with a heart " black with guilt—I *cannot—will not go!* I *can-* " *not* meet the Judge!"——

Here his ravings roſe to the higheſt phrenzy of deſpair; and Miſs Elmford was ready to ſink with terror, while ſtruck with the truth of that alarming and awful aſſertion which ſhe here ſaw verified—

> A death-bed's a detector of the heart,
> A *fearful* lecture, and of ſov'reign pow'r;
> To vice confuſion—*tho'* to virtue peace!

During this ſcene of horror and diſtreſs, a violent thundering was heard at the outer door. Miſs Elmford's heart again palpitated. Magdalene flew down the ſtairs, and opened the door. Three men, who

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who had left their horſes in the care of a ſervant at the court gate, ruſhed in; the firſt a fine young gentleman; the next a clergyman; and the laſt a plain, honeſt-looking countryman. Impatience was in every look: they preſſed forward with little ceremony. The old woman was overwhelmed with confuſion.

Various apprehenſions ſtruggled in the boſom of Miſs Elmford. One moment ſhe hoped the expected viſitor was arrived, to relieve her; and the next, ſhe conceived they were perſons ſent in purſuit of her by Lord Lauderbrooke.

She heard ſeveral voices at once; but could not particularly diſtinguiſh any thing which was ſaid. She could no longer reſiſt the impulſe of curioſity: ſhe ſtole to the top of the ſtairs, and liſtened unobſerved, till ſhe heard her own name mentioned; and the old woman, in heſitating accents, deny her. One of the voices grew louder, and more importunate—She knew it to be that of her father.

Then, with the ſwiftneſs of lightning, ſhe ruſhed down the ſtairs, and flew into his arms, while he preſſed her to his heart, and bathed her cheek with

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his tears. She ſobbed audibly, but could not ſpeak. "Be comforted, darling of my ſoul." cried the honeſt Ambroſe, "be comforted! Look up, and "thank your friend and deliverer."

She at length raiſed her lucid eyes, overflowing with tears, which met thoſe of the amiable Auguſtus, who approached, and took her hand with a modeſt diffidence, while her heart throbbed, and glowed, alternately.

"May I be permitted, dear Miſs Elmford!" ſaid he, "to congratulate you on your releaſe from "this vile place?" A ready bluſh waved over her humid cheek, while the enraptured father, without giving her time to reply, interrupted,—"Return, "my Alicia, your beſt acknowledgments to this "young gentleman. You know not how much "you are his debtor: to him, and to him *only*, "you owe your deliverance.—A thouſand bleſſings "attend him!"

It was now no time for punctilio—He would have proceeded—had ſhe not turned to Auguſtus, and dropped on her knees, to thank him. His eyes beamed with tranſcendant luſtre; and Miſs Elmford,

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ſord, forgetting every unfavourable impreſſion, fancied ſhe never ſaw him look ſo charmingly.

He took her other hand, and raiſed her with the greateſt tenderneſs. She then firſt noticed her friend Dr. Goodwill; and took his offered hand. By turns they each embraced her, while the tribute of joy and gratitude ſpontaneous flowed from every eye.

During this affecting interview, the old woman turned pale, her lips quivered, and her trembling limbs were ſcarcely able to ſupport her. They noticed her agitation, and deſired her to be compoſed: but what arguments can calm the guilty mind? Fear and terror are its natural concomitants. She beſeeched them, with many tears, not to diſturb the peace of her dying huſband.

They bade her be comforted, and aſſured her, that, on the contrary, they would render him all the aſſiſtance in their power; and, as ſoon as her emotions had a little ſubſided, at their deſire, ſhe retired, though with ſome reluctance, to her huſband, and left them together in the hall.

Her

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Here Miſs Elmford was made acquainted with the means of her diſcovery, to which account ſhe attended with mute aſtoniſhment.

The very day that ſhe left Lauderbrooke Hall, Auguſtus arrived, according to his propoſal, and immediately flew to the houſe of Joſeph Anthony, who informed him of her flight, and, *what he knew*, of the occaſion of it: intimating, that he underſtood my Lord, his father, filled with revenge, was gone in purſuit of her. On coming to the hall, in his father's abſence, he found every thing there in the greateſt confuſion; and a letter ſoon after arrived, ſuperſcribed—

"To Lord Lauderbrooke, *with ſpeed.*"

The letter was delivered to Auguſtus, whoſe impatience prevailing over his duty, and decorum, he broke the ſeal; and read as follows:—

"May

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" May it pleaſe your Lordſhip,

" Your fair fugitive is fallen into our " hands, where we will take care to detain her till " you come. Make all the ſpeed you poſſibly can, " and the perverſe fair one ſhall yet crown your " wiſhes.

" Your's to ſerve, in what I may,

" Woodland Caſtle." " Rufus B."

This letter accounted for the former whiſperings and conſultations ſhe had remarked, and for the delays ſhe had experienced.

Her father had been made acquainted with her previous intention, by their common friend Joſeph; and the old man immediately came to *his* houſe for farther information. Dr. Goodwill was conſulted on the occaſion; and deſired to accompany the lover, and the diſtreſſed parent, to ſnatch the unfortunate maid from the precipice of ruin; and, there being no time to be loſt, they ſet off immediately.

Their

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Their mutual congratulations were hardly ended, before Magdalene, as though unwilling to leave them long alone, returned; but appeared not to have quite overcome her uneasiness and agitation.

Miss Elmford had not had time to report her discovery: she therefore waited a better opportunity; and, with little ceremony, they all followed the old woman up stairs to the sick room; although she seemed to lead the way with much reluctance.

The husband, at their first entering, appeared delirious.——"Who are you?" cried he: "Are "you the ministers of vengeance? If so, leave me! "leave me! I shall not long be here. Let me but "die in peace, I will disclose every thing!"

Dr. Goodwill offered him spiritual consolation, and he grew more rational in his exclamations: but it was with the utmost difficulty his wife could be kept alive, while—although he frequently talked incoherently, and often wandered from his subject—he recited such deeds to his astonished auditors, as

"Harrow'd up their souls, and froze their blood!"

It

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It appeared that he was admitted, at an early period of life, into the confidence of Lord Lauderbrooke, [then Sir Thomas Beaufort,] and received the higheſt marks of his favour for the vileſt of ſervices—thoſe of miniſtering to his guilty pleaſures, and juvenile diſſipations. He was privy to every amour; and made himſelf inſtrumental to every intrigue of the moſt accompliſhed libertine. Nor did his employer frequently fail to exerciſe his evil genius, in the deepeſt ſtratagems, and reward him with a liberality proportionable to his merits. It had been, comparatively, well, if they had ſtopped here: but they ſeemed deſtined to fill the meaſure of their iniquities!

The only remaining branches of this formerly extenſive family, were Lord Lauderbrooke and Sir Edmund Beaufort; and even they but diſtantly related; though they appeared to be on a foot of the ſtricteſt intimacy. Sir Edmund's eſtates were conſiderable, and lay contiguous to thoſe of his relation, to whom they devolved, in caſe of his deceaſe without iſſue.

The ſelfiſh and illiberal heart of Lord Lauderbrooke felt uneaſy at the union of Sir Edmund with an

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an accompliſhed young lady of ſmall fortune: and ſtill more ſo on the birth of a daughter, about fifteen months after their marriage. Yet he had the addreſs to conceal the chagrin, and appeared very deſirous of the company of this amiable family; in whoſe friendſhip his worthy Lady felt the moſt refined and undiſſembled happineſs: nor had ſhe a ſuſpicion of the duplicity and perfidy of her Lord, who had ſecretly ſet his heart on the eſtates of his friend, and only waited for a favourable opportunity to get them into his hands.

This opportunity ſoon offered; for Sir Edmund, in his military capacity, was ordered abroad; and his Lordſhip, like David in the caſe of Uriah, hoped that he would fall in the heat of battle, that he might have nothing to anſwer for to his own conſcience from the event. Theſe hopes were fruſtrated by letters from the hero, that he had accompliſhed the purpoſe of his miſſion; and was about to return with honour to his country. Lord Lauderbrooke intercepted all his letters; and forged others in their ſtead; purporting, that he had fallen in the field of battle.

Meanwhile

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Meanwhile he employed his minion Rufus to engage a band of ruffians to way-lay him, on his arrival; and to bring him to this caſtle, which belonged to him, where he was to hold him in confinement for life; in conſideration of which important ſervice, he promiſed to ſecure him an annuity, and make him the keeper of his injured relation.

Miſs Elmford, ſtruck with horror, here fainted in the arms of her father. Auguſtus changed colour, and waited with impatience for the ſequel.

Rufus continued his narration by obſerving, that there were ſtill two obſtacles in the way, about which his diabolical employer conſulted him; and aſſured him of the moſt diſtinguiſhed favours, if he could remove them. He undertook the infernal buſineſs; and engaged to ſet aſide the lovely infant and amiable mother. The *firſt dæmon* rejoiced not more ſincerely over the *firſt victim*, than Lord Lauderbrooke over this propoſal!

It was reported that the unhappy widow uſed to take a frequent excurſion with her little innocent, about two years of age, into the moſt ſequeſtered parts of the country, daily, to meditate on her

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loſs, to brood over her misfortunes; and ſhed in ſecret the tear of bitter anguiſh! In one of thoſe excurſions—dreadful to relate!—the infernal cabal propoſed to cut off root and branch.

Rufus, and another of his agents, undertook the bloody taſk; though he owned his heart revolted at the idea. They neither of them knew the lady perſonally; but, by miſtake, ſurprized the nurſe with the infant, one morning; and ſhe, inſtead of the mother, fell a victim to the monſters!

But the charms and cries of the dear infant quite unmanned them: when a countryman coming by, their coward hearts betrayed them, and they fled with precipitation; while the dear unfortunate, left alone, raiſed its voice, and lifted its little hands for protection!

The traveller's heart melted. He took her up in his arms; and, mingling his kiſſes and tears with hers, fought to ſoothe her ſorrows, by folding her throbbing heart to his boſom, with all the ardour of paternal affection!

The

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The scene which took place, when the narrator came to this circumstance, surpasses all description. Augustus stood thunderstruck at the accumulated crimes of a father, and his heart half revolted from its allegiance. Miss Elmford sunk insensible into the arms of Ambrose, who, with streaming eyes, emphatically exclaimed, "And *I*, thank heaven! "was that passenger! And *you*, my Alicia, are "the dear, dear rescued child!—Yes! I was the "instrument of saving you.—Do not—do not dis-"own me!"—

She lifted her humid eyes to Ambrose——"Best, "and tenderest of men! and *are you not* my *real* "father?—and *have* I not a *mother indeed?* Give "me my *other* parents; but let me not resign "you!"—Then, after sobbing convulsively, she exclaimed—"Thank heaven, I *have* seen my *other* "father!—I have wept over him!—Let me *fly* to "*him!* Let me carry him the tidings of liberty! "Let *me*—let *me* be the messenger"——

She could not be restrained: the keys were demanded—she rushed away. They followed her. She descended into the prison, threw herself into his arms, and bedewed his neck with her tears.

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She had loſt the powers of articulation! The heart of Auguſtus was ſwollen with indignation at the vile deeds of his father, and the dying miſcreant, while it melted with commiſeration for the wrongs of his honoured relation, whoſe hand he preſſed and bathed in tears.

Dr. Goodwill, after the firſt paroxiſms had ſubſided, explained the whole myſtery of wickedneſs to the aſtoniſhed man, who embraced them all by turns, while his face was irradiated with a decent joy; and then, falling on his knees, he invoked every bleſſing of heaven on their heads for their kind ſervices.

"High and wonderful are thy ways, O God!" he cried: "Thoſe who call on thee, ſhall not call in "vain! Thou haſt been my help and ſupport in all "my afflictions; and thou haſt promiſed that, *thou "wilt never leave me, nor forſake me.* Oh! give "me a heart duly ſenſible of thy mercies; and ever "thankful for all thy goodneſs.—Forgive my ene"mies, and give them grace to ſue for that mercy "which they have denied to me and mine!"

They

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They then ſupported him to the chamber of the dying man, who ſhrunk down as though he had ſeen a ſpectre; and Magdalene, at their entrance, fell on the floor, in a ſtate of inſenſibility.

Nothing could exceed the ſolemnity of this ſcene: they all knelt around the bed, by the deſire of Sir Edmund, to implore peace and pardon for the wretch, whoſe averted eyes dared not turn on thoſe he had ſo eſſentially injured.

Their preſence, they obſerved, only ſerved to increaſe his agonies; and they retired, deſiring the unfortunate wife, on her recovery, to attend them; which ſhe did, apparently with the ſenſations of a malefactor in his proceſſion to the fatal ſcaffold!

They then ſolemnly aſſured her, that, if ſhe would diſcloſe whatever ſhe knew farther of this diabolical buſineſs, and of the fate of the ſtill-undiſcovered lady, as they conceived ſhe had already ſuffered ſufficiently, they would not only pardon the paſt, but, provided they found her contrition proportionable to her crimes, ſet her above ſuch temptations for the future; and that they would not

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further disturb her husband, whose glass seemed to have but a few sands to run.

"To *err* is human; to *forgive*, divine!"

This prudent measure had its effect in leading to the following completion of this very important discovery.

Lord Lauderbrooke, she said, was severely mortified at the failure of their foregoing sanguinary scheme; and resolved that the wife of his unfortunate friend should not long be an obstacle to his ambitious designs, although Providence had once preserved her from his violence.

He took advantage of the distress of her mind, to convey her to a house appropriated to the reception of lunatics; and then propagated a report, that she had rashly put an end to her own existence. They were likewise made acquainted with the place of her confinement, a circumstance of the first importance.

It now remained to conduct Miss Beaufort [as we must now call her] to a place of safety, lest Lord Lauderbrooke

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Lauderbrooke ſhould find her; and inſtantly to exert every means to liberate her unfortunate mother. It was therefore propoſed, that Ambroſe ſhould take home with him his long-adopted *daughter;* the *real father*, at the ſame time, deſiring to honour them with his company; while the doctor and Auguſtus returned to the hall, to extort from his Lordſhip an order for the releaſement of the lady.

For a *ſon* to criminate a *father;* to bring a charge which muſt affect the life of him to whom he owes exiſtence; to ſacrifice the affections of a *child*, and riſe to act in the character of an *accuſer*—is a taſk which requires the ſtoic inflexibility of a Brutus, who, adopting the Roman people as his children, condemned to death his own ſons, as an act of juſtice to the commonwealth.

Auguſtus had ever been a pattern of filial obedience, and he poſſeſſed a mind ſuſceptible of the tendereſt impreſſions of humanity: but he found it impoſſible to juſtify his conduct to the world, or his own conſcience, ſhould he connive at acts of ſuch marked atrocity. It was therefore determined that, in order to ſpare his feelings, he ſhould abſent himſelf for a time, while Dr. Goodwill, whom he delegated

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legated, ſhould act in the developement of this nefarious buſineſs according to the dictates of his own boſom.

This worthy man poſſeſſed an integrity of ſoul which was not to be biaſſed by the allurements of fortune, or the ſhocks of adverſity. No obſtacle could be thrown in the way of his duty, which he was not capable of ſurmounting; nor could any thing divert him from that narrow path, ſo hard to tread, and ſo difficult to keep. His manners were ſtrict, but not ſevere. Like him, whoſe ſervant he was, he was the advocate of juſtice; but, in juſtice he always remembered mercy. He thought, with Titus, every day loſt, in which he had not done ſome good action; but when duty called him, to cenſure, he knew no diſtinction of perſons; never forgetting the golden maxim of the ancient philoſopher,* "Thoſe who reprove us are our greateſt friends."

Lord Lauderbrooke was his patron: but he demanded an audience of him; and, without equivocating, or qualifying, boldly opened to him a full

* Pythagoras.

and

and circumſtantial account of the diſcoveries which had been made; not fearing even to remind him, that he was amenable to his country for the violation of its laws.

The natural pride of Lord Lauderbrooke took alarm, and burſt forth in indignation at the diſgrace which attended ſuch a declaration from a dependant; he gave the reins to his violent paſſions; and, in his frantic emotions, outvied the moſt deſperate madman!

The doctor waited the ſubſiding of this mental ſtorm; and then, with a determined accent, aſſured him that nothing could avail him, nor palliate his offences, but an immediate order, under his hand, for the removal of the unfortunate lady from the confinement he had occaſioned her.

Vice is frequently a coward when detected and expoſed—its boaſted fortitude is but of a momentary duration—

"True courage dwells not in a troubled flood
"Of mounting ſpirits, and fermenting blood;
"But in the ſoul with virtue over-rul'd,
"Inflam'd by reaſon, and by reaſon cool'd."

The

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The doctor's calm and steady conduct, his cool and determined reasoning, operated so strongly on the haughty temper of his Lordship, that he at length submitted; and made some concessions, which did little credit to his imperious spirit: but he refused to see his son; he refused to see his relations, or ask their pardon; while he lavished abuse on the *treacherous* Rufus, as he called him.

"My Lord," said the doctor, "the language "of repentance and contrition would better become "you. Cease to stigmatize or reprobate others, "and look into your own bosom! The agent of "your crimes is less culpable than you: besides, he "has felt the agonies of remorse; and will most "probably, in the course of a few hours, appear "before a higher tribunal, perhaps to give in an "accusation against *you* as the abettor of his guilt! "Think of this; and seek for mercy, while yet "mercy might be found!"

He bowed respectfully, and left his Lordship astonished and confounded. He then, accompanied by Augustus, repaired to the cottage of Ambrose, where they were received with the greatest cordiality; and from thence, with the utmost impatience, they

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they fought the place where the unfortunate lady was confined.

Alicia could not be induced to ſtay behind; with her newly-diſcovered parent, ſhe reſolved to attend them.

The building was ſituated on a lonely wild, at a great diſtance from any public road; and preſented a juſt ſpecimen of the gloomy architecture of the fourteenth century. On delivering their letter, they were introduced into an inner apartment, where a pale and emaciated, though not ungraceful, female figure, roſe to receive them. Dr. Goodwill firſt advanced, in order to prepare her for the important interview of thoſe ſtill more dear to her. As he approached her, ſhe recollected his venerable perſon, and fainted in his ſupporting arms. The aſſiduities of the attendants ſoon reſtored her; but it was a conſiderable time before ſhe was able to bear the news of her enlargement, and receive the affectionate embraces of an impatient huſband and child.

Inſtead of attempting to deſcribe the extatic paſſions which took poſſeſſion of every boſom at this affecting

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affecting meeting, it is surely wise, like the celebrated painter of old, to draw a veil over the scene, and give imagination its amplest scope!

O! who can speak
"The mingled passions that surpriz'd each breast,
"And thro' their nerves in shiv'ring transport ran!
"Then blaz'd the smother'd flame, avow'd and bold—
"*Love*, *gratitude*, and *pity*, wept at once!"

"Friendship is, of itself, a holy tie;
"But made more sacred by adversity."

On their return to the cottage on the heath, the good old Dorothy, with all the fond and passionate anxieties of a mother, on her knees, implored pity and pardon of the now happy parents; and, in the most moving language, besought them not to rob her of her darling child. "If I lose my Alicia," said she, "I lose all the consolation I have pro-"mised my old age! O! let me still *call* her *mine*; "let her glad my eyes often, for the little time I "have to live; and I will bless you all with my "latest breath!"

She was comforted with their concurrent assurance, that her adopted *daughter* would never forego

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go that tender *name;* and that she should never be deprived of that maternal intercourse she had so justly merited. Her honest heart overflowed with grateful raptures, as she pressed her Alicia to her bosom, and bathed her cheek with a deluge of affectionate tears.

" Her plenteous joys,
" Wanton in fulness, sought to hide themselves
" In drops of sorrow!"

They now turned all their attention to the narrative of the rescued lady, from whose own mouth they learnt, that she had been decoyed by a deep-laid stratagem to the place of her confinement, under pretence of a temporary removal from scenes which only served to increase that melancholy which incessantly preyed on her heart.

The mind, under the pressure of affliction, naturally delights in solitude, and loves to pour out its woes in the deep shades of retirement:

" It is the wretch's comfort still to have
" Some small reserve of near and inward woe,
" Some unsuspected hoard of darling grief,
" Which he, unseen, may wail, and weep and mourn,
" And glutton-like devour *alone*."

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But she felt a degree of alarm when she found her walks abridged; and more so, when totally deprived of liberty, and confined within those walls, which contained some of the most unfortunate of the human race. Her keepers, indeed, treated her with respect; but refused to answer her any questions, and maintained a rigid silence on the subject of her future destiny. She was furnished with books, and other indulgencies, to beguile the solitary hours: but what can compensate the loss of liberty, when we have a proper sense of that loss? There is not a heart, however weary of the world, but feels when under restraint; and *even sighs* for those scenes of freedom which can afford it *no pleasure*.

Resigned to her fate, she now sought to forget the present, and look to another, and a better, state. Her poetical talents were far above mediocrity; and she frequently exercised them on those subjects, for which they seemed happily calculated; and on which a fine genius ought to be employed. Among other productions, she had preserved the following appropriate stanzas, entitled

THE

THE CAPTIVE.

"The little warbler of the wild,
"Who long had rang'd, untam'd and gay,
"By man's insidious arts beguil'd,
"And ravish'd from the shelt'ring spray,

"Awhile neglects his food—his strain,
"And beats his wirey prison strong;
"Till, proving all resistance vain,
"He cheers his heart, and thrills his song:

"So, lost to all the joys of life,
"To freedom, friendship, *social love!*
"The breast no more maintains its strife,
"Since all its struggles fruitless prove!

"No more, with retrospective glance,
"I turn my fondly-ling'ring eye;
"With faith and hope, my views advance
"To nobler scenes, and raptures high.

"Soon disencumber'd from those ties
"That chain her down to earth's dull clod,
"The light enfranchis'd soul shall rise,
"*To* enjoy her freedom, and her God!"

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After this providential eclairciſſement, Dr. Goodwill ſought another conference with Lord Lauderbrooke, and found him in a frame of mind very different from what he had expected. He now took the doctor's hand, thanked him for his frankneſs, and begged his direction to make his peace with heaven, and ſome atonement for his cruelty and ingratitude to his much-injured relatives; whoſe faces, he ſaid, he could never ſee more; nor that of his ſon, to whom he had ſet ſo dreadful an example!—"Let me, through you," ſaid he, "ſupplicate that pardon which I do not *deſerve*, nor "can I yet *aſk* of them in perſon. Guilty as I "am, I cannot meet thoſe eyes, which muſt pierce "me through—which muſt annihilate me! Heaven "is witneſs to my remorſe! Be it my turn now to "ſuffer! and I ſhall feel a far bitterer pang than "that which I have given others. I deſpiſe the "world, and the world's wealth—which have ſo "miſled me—and hide me in ſome unknown ſolitude, where I may give up all the remaining days "of my life to mortification, prayer, and repentance!"

The good man ſaid he was authorized to grant the pardon he ſolicited, in the names of his friends; and

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and he hoped that the ſincerity of his reformation would finally obtain the divine abſolution.

Shortly after, his Lordſhip, in legal form, ſurrendered up all his real and perſonal property and eſtates in England, in favour of his ſon Auguſtus, and the much-injured Beauforts, only reſerving to himſelf a ſmall annuity, and place of reſidence, which had formerly devolved to him, in the Iſle of Man, whither he retired, and gave himſelf up, according to his reſolution, to a life of ſolitude and ſequeſtration.

The wretch Rufus, who had been the inſtrument of all theſe domeſtic calamities, lived but a few days after the diſcovery.

The fair hand of the lovely Alicia, with the full approbation of all parties, ſoon bleſſed the worthy Auguſtus, whoſe heart had long been hers; and ſhe ſaw herſelf miſtreſs of that patrimonial manſion, where ſhe had ſpent ſome of the happieſt, as well as ſome of the moſt bitter moments of her life.

The firſt care of this amiable pair, on ſucceeding to thoſe eſtates and honours, was to contribute to the happineſs of all their friends.

Ambroſe

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Ambrose and his wife, conformable to their wishes, were removed to reside under their own roof, where he acted in the capacity of a steward; and his good woman was indulged with the much-desired privilege of enjoying a kind and domestic intercourse with a woman who was the honor of her sex, and who knew how to estimate the maternal favours she had formerly received.

Joseph Anthony was presented with a little free-school, which had been endowed by a former branch of the Beaufort family, by which he was enabled to support a character of decency and respectability.

Edmund Beaufort resumed his estates and honours, to the satisfaction of all the country round, on which he conferred his bounty with an unsparing hand. The exemplary virtues of his lady rendered her an object of universal admiration and esteem. From having long been sufferers themselves, they had learnt to feel more exquisitely for the sufferings of others. They had participated of the bitter cup of affliction; and, from sympathy, still became more endeared to each other; evincing their increasing affections by a reciprocal series of the tenderest offices. They had been initiated in the school of adversity,

adverſity, where they had learned, in part—while proſperous vice flouriſhed and triumphed—why

"The good man's ſhare
"In life, was gall and bitterneſs of ſoul."

They were taught to adore the wonders of RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE; and acknowledge the hand of PROVIDENCE, through the moſt intricate labyrinths of *human events*, working in ſecret for univerſal good.

FINIS.

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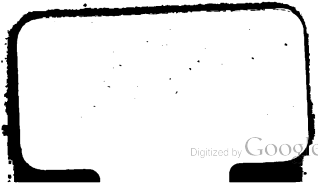
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